



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk 860-441-6640  
Town Manager  
860-441-6630

## Meeting Minutes

### Representative Town Meeting

**Moderator Christine Conley, Representatives Karin Adams, Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joseph Baril, Alicia Bauer, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne E. DeMatto, John A. Espada, Robert M. Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Meyer, Douglas Monaghan, Karen Morton, Kathy Neugent, Scott Newsome, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Shawn Powers, John F. Scott IV, Richard Semeraro, Bill Smith, Judith Strode, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Fred Turnbull, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Ivy R. Williams and Jonathan E. Wilson**

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Wednesday, December 10, 2014

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

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#### Regular Meeting

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#### A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Christine Conley called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.  
31 members were present, and a quorum was declared.*

Members Present: Moderator Conley, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Espada, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Heede, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Longino, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Meyer, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Morton, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Scott, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Smith, Rep. Strode, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Turnbull, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Wilson

Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Luck, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Parker, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Assistant Superintendent Susan Austin, Director of Public Works Gary Schneider, Town Mayor Rita Schmidt, Town Councilors, Genevieve Cerf, Bruce Flax and Harry Watson, State Representative-Elect Aundre Bumgardner, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.*

#### B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.*

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 8, 2014

*A motion that the minutes be approved was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Baril. The motion carried unanimously.*

#### D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

*Robert Palm, 108 Prospect Hill Road, Noank, spoke in support of the additional funding for the demolition of Noank School.*

#### E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

*Reps. Bauer and Parker notified the Town Clerk they are not able to attend the meeting.*

*The Moderator mentioned an email from Ed Johnson supporting re-using a portion of Noank School. Also noted was the Town Attorney's opinion regarding the feasibility of the RTM creating an Economic Task Force. All RTM members received a copy of the memo.*

*George Mathanool, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, extended an invitation to a Holiday Luncheon to RTM members.*

*Rep. Scott recognized the Mystic and Groton Rotary Clubs for their contributions to Groton*

*Human Services. Over \$8,400 was raised to help defray the cost associated with providing eligible Groton households with food baskets and toys.*

**F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

**1. Financial report**

*Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of November 30, 2014 (unaudited) is approximately \$11.3 million. The General Contingency amount for FYE 2015 was appropriated at \$350,000. No transfers have been made from General Contingency. The Capital Reserve Fund balance as of November 30, 2014 is estimated at \$2.84 million. The slight increase is due to interest income.*

**2. Monthly briefing**

*The Town Manager highlighted various items from the Town Manager's News. Mr. Oefinger reported Cindy Landry has been appointed the new Director of Finance. He congratulated and welcomed her in her new position.*

*Mr. Oefinger mentioned the very successful United Way campaign and recognized Kate Bradley, Program Supervisor of Marketing and Special Events in Parks and Recreation, for the excellent job she did coordinating this year's campaign.*

*James L. Streeter, Groton Town Historian, is presenting a two-part series on Thames Street. The second part will be held on December 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Public Library, as well as televised on GMTV. He encouraged all to attend.*

*Also noted was that the Town of Groton Finance Department received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. It is the twenty-first consecutive year that the Town has received this award.*

*Mr. Oefinger mentioned two calendars attached - the Town Charter requirements for the Budget of FYE 2016 and the day-to-day Budget Calendar, which will be issued a number of times.*

**G. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

*Dr. Graner introduced Susan Austin, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and reminded RTM members of the joint meeting of RTM School Facilities Task Force, Town Council and BOE to be held December 11th. The purpose of this meeting is to inform and gather ideas on the thirty year plan that has been proposed for reorganizing the Groton school district. Dr. Graner gave a presentation on the plan, which includes closing three middle schools and forming one consolidated middle school that would accommodate approximately 900 students. Some of the advantages of this plan include eliminating redistricting and racial imbalance. Also proposed is an expansion of the International Baccalaureate Program, entitled the Middle Years Program, to middle school students. The proposed site for the new middle school is adjacent to Fitch High School. The three schools to be closed include Claude Chester, Pleasant Valley and S.B. Butler Middle Schools. The plan includes turning the sites of Claude Chester and S.B. Butler schools into playing fields and the possibility of Pleasant Valley for economic development. These schools are problematic and closing them would lead to significant savings.*

*Rep. DeMatto questioned if the potential 80 % reimbursement from the State is due to the issue of racial imbalance. Dr. Graner explained it is and the criteria necessary for the reimbursement.*

*Rep. Scott approves of the proposal, but questioned if the deed issue with the Merritt property has been addressed. Dr. Graner replied the property must be used for recreation or open space.*

*Rep. Neugent touched upon the issue of a large middle school and two large elementary schools, and questioned if the students' comfort in such a large environment has been addressed. Dr. Graner explained there would be small learning communities within the schools to alleviate that*

issue.

*Rep. Swindell questioned the IBP Magnet program and if we have the capacity for it. Dr. Graner responded it would be an intradistrict magnet school that would accommodate approximately 150 students.*

*Rep. Turnbull asked how exclusive the IBP is and what percentage of the population could be enrolled in the program. Dr. Graner explained the three different versions of the program. The first is the academically-focused Diploma program in which 1-2% of the students are enrolled. There are approximately 150 students enrolled in courses who are not working towards the diploma. The third version, which they are hoping to introduce, is the Certificate program which is not considered as exclusive as the previous two, but would include many more students.*

*Councilor Watson asked if any of the large middle schools Dr. Graner mentioned in his presentation are in our reference group and added that he is excited about the program. He questioned the cost associated with the program and wondered if any thought has been given to including other districts, on a tuition basis. Dr. Graner responded that the idea has been considered (intradistrict), but we would have to wait for the moratorium on magnet schools to be lifted before the idea of out-of-district students can be entertained.*

#### **H. LIAISON REPORTS**

*None.*

#### **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **1. FINANCE - Chairman Granatosky**

*No meeting; no report.*

##### **2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES -Chairman Semeraro**

*No meeting; no report.*

##### **3. EDUCATION - Chairman Swindell**

*No meeting; no report.*

##### **4. RECREATION - Chairman Svencer**

*No meeting; no report.*

##### **5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Pasqualini**

*No meeting; no report.*

##### **6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Heede**

##### **2014-0327 Noank School Demolition**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ALLOCATION OF \$125,000 OF CAPITAL RESERVE FUND BALANCE TO THE VACANT SCHOOL PROPERTIES (NOANK SCHOOL DEMOLITION) PROJECT

WHEREAS, \$480,000 was approved in the FYE 2015 capital improvement budget for a project to remove the underground oil tank at Noank School and demolish the building, and

WHEREAS, current bids for the project received from eight contractors range from \$539,000 to \$1,141,899, and

WHEREAS, additional funding in the amount of \$125,000 is necessary to meet the low bid shortfall of \$65,000, provide \$50,000 for contingency, and provide \$10,000 for abatement monitoring, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the allocation of \$125,000 from Capital Reserve

Fund Balance to project 6)G) Vacant School Properties.

Refer to RTM under Rule 6.5.3.

**This matter was Adopted.**

*Chairman Heede read the minutes of the meeting held on December 10, 2014. (Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)*

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Heede, seconded by Rep. Massett, and so voted unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Rep. Heede, seconded by Rep. DeMatto to approve the additional funding for the Noank School demolition in the amount of \$125,000, which is necessary to meet the low bid shortfall of \$65,000, provide \$50,000 for contingency, and provide \$10,000 for abatement monitoring.*

*Rep. Pasqualini expressed his lack of support for this motion. He would like to see the actual bid and all the numbers that are already approved. He would like to see itemized bids, as he feels there may be some things that the Public Works Department can do to save the Town some money.*

*Rep. Neugent questioned Public Works Director Gary Schneider as to how the original bid was derived and why is there such a shortfall. Mr. Schneider explained the bidding process and indicated that the legitimate bids were all in the same cost range.*

*Rep. Smith noted three additional school buildings need to be demolished and questioned if the same issues will arise when the time comes. The Town Manager responded that in the past the Town has been fortunate in that we were able to get rid of the building at no cost to us.*

*Councilor Cerf expressed her support of the demolition. She toured the building and noted it is in disrepair, is hazardous, and that there is no way to save it.*

*Rep. Ambroise expressed that he is against the motion. He would like to see a comprehensive list of all the buildings the Town would like to have demolished. He thinks that the Town may get a better price. Mr. Oefinger responded that by waiting another couple of years, it will be even more expensive and that the building needs to come down.*

*MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION to a vote was made by Rep. Monaghan.*

*Rep. Ambroise raised a "Point of Order," which was overruled by the Moderator.*

*The vote to Move the Question carried 26 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Heede, Neugent, Scott and Swindell.)*

*The vote on the motion to approve \$125,000 for the additional funds needed for the Noank School Demolition carried 23 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Conley, Meyer, Pasqualini, Scott and Semeraro. Abstaining: Rep. Adams.)*

## **7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Ambroise**

*No meeting; no report.*

### **J. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS**

*None.*

### **K. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None.*

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

*The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m.*